

## **Depression**

### **Depression is a state that**

- is not just a result of random brain chemistry
- is not simply genetic
- is generally a temporary emotional state that can be understood and controlled
- can be lifted permanently through effective therapy

### **Effective therapy for depression**

- does not involve endless introspection
- teaches the client practical skills
- deals with troubling past experiences and does not dwell on them
- is present and future focused
- makes improvements from the outset

### **Depression is a highly emotional state**

This is true, even though a person may feel flat, as if the world had lost its colour or as if a heavy grey cloud covered everything. Classic symptoms include depressed mood, lack of enthusiasm for usual activities, loss of appetite (or sometimes a compensating exaggeration of appetite), anxiety, lack of confidence, social withdrawal and excessive introspection. Highly negative self-talk and self-loathing are also common, whilst associated conditions sometimes include eating disorders, weight problems, addictions, obsessions and compulsions (OCD), self-harming, phobias, PTSD and a range of other concerns. Extreme sufferers may have considered or attempted suicide.

### **Depression is curable**

Evidence does not support the notion that depression is a fixed condition that is purely genetic, though some people may be more prone to depressive episodes than others for reasons of both genetic temperament and experience. Very many go through depressive episodes at times in their lives; the vast majority recover, especially when given intelligent support. Proper recognition of past experiences (e.g. trauma, neglect, bullying etc) that have led to depression is important; good therapy helps a person put those firmly into the past. However, major studies have shown that brief therapy methods that are goal-directed, future-oriented and time-limited, teaching definite cognitive and emotional skills, have the most positive outcomes, are much more effective than older psychodynamic therapies dealing almost exclusively with the past and actually better than drug treatments in preventing relapse.

**Therapy for depression at the centre** is solution-focused, based on current knowledge of how the brain works and is complementary to conventional allopathic medicine, yet remains holistic and respectful of individual differences and beliefs. It is based on the Human Givens framework for effective therapy, incorporating an extended view of human needs in general and a new and liberating understanding of the range of factors involved in the cycle of depression in particular. It also employs effective relaxation methods, story and metaphor and other imaginative traditional techniques, combined with some of the best methods from such modern therapies such as CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy).

### **How about troubling past experiences?**

For some, depression may be the direct result of particular, identifiable traumatic or otherwise challenging past experiences that need to be addressed in effective ways; in others a pattern may have been established more gradually. There are many reasons why people become depressed and the therapist will want to understand how it works for you in an open-minded way, so that therapy can be tailored to suit you.

### **How long will it take?**

Brief therapy is of course brief - we aim to conclude therapy in as few sessions as possible, but we also don't advise skimping on sessions just to keep it short. Some conditions take longer to treat than others, especially where there are additional concerns around confidence and self-esteem, fears and phobias, disturbing and traumatic experiences etc. We would advise that at least three sessions be given at the outset, with further sessions if necessary. (In cases of financial hardship, we have schemes to assist anyone needing an extended course of sessions. Please ask about this.)

### **Should I continue with medication?**

Yes. If you are already on prescribed antidepressants and other medication, you should continue with this at the outset and consult your doctor about stopping or reducing dosage in due course.

### **How will I know it's working?**

You will simply feel better and begin to be able to think more clearly. This may happen quickly or more gradually and you will be encouraged to note the signs and amplify the effect for yourself.